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(54) **METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR ACCESSING MULTIPLE ROWS OF MEDIA OBJECTS IN AN AUTOMATED STORAGE LIBRARY USING A SINGLE TRACK ROBOTIC MECHANISM**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 728 days.

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360/99.02

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369/38.01, 30.3, 30.31, 30.32, 30.33, 30.34,
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30.41, 30.42, 30.43, 30.44, 30.45, 30.46,
30.47, 30.48, 30.49

(57) **ABSTRACT**

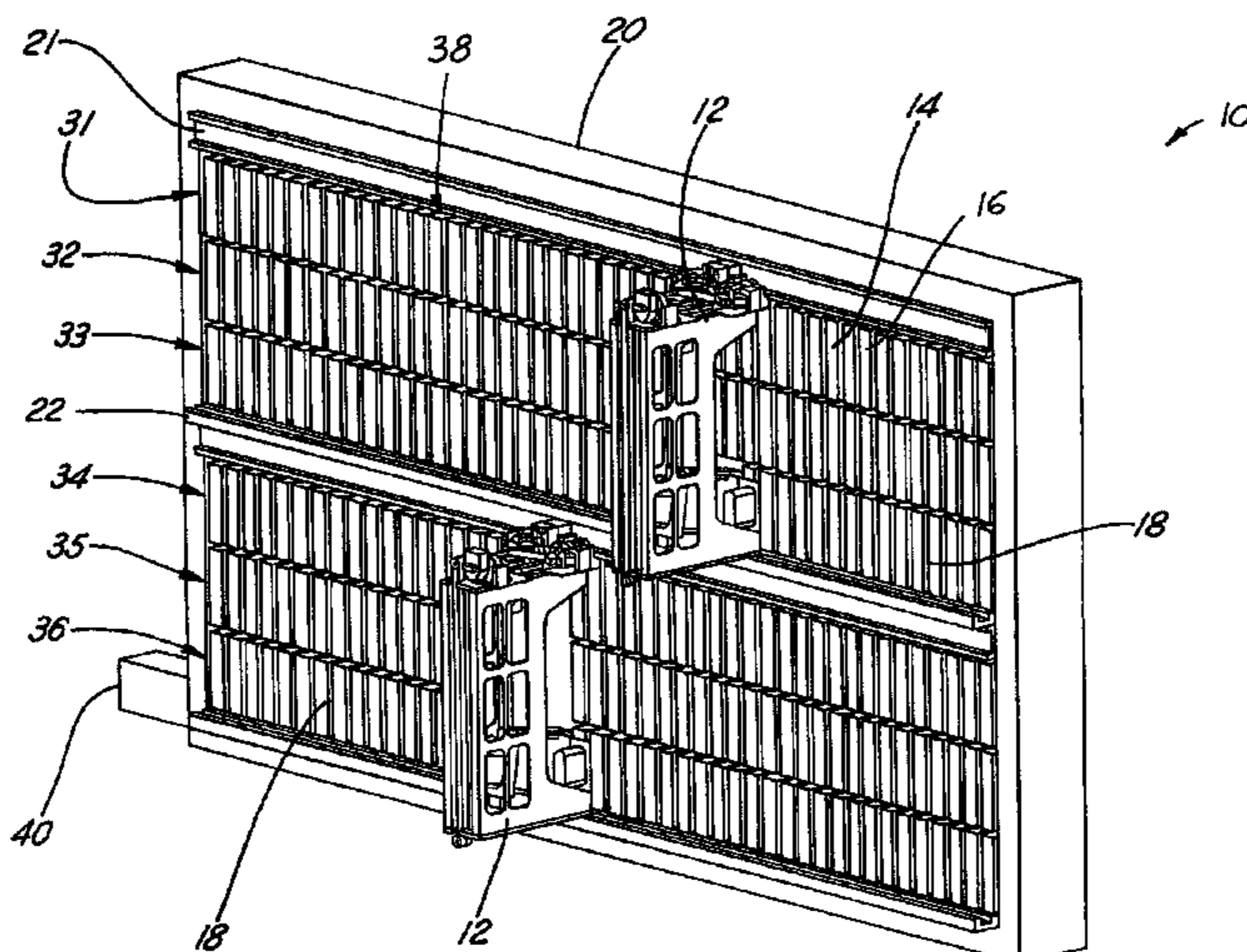
A method and system for accessing media objects in an automated storage library using a robotic mechanism included mounting the robotic mechanism to a horizontally arranged track arranged in the same plane as first and second horizontal rows of media object storage cells. Each of the media object storage cells houses a media object. The horizontally arranged track is disposed adjacent to the first row of media object storage cells. The robotic mechanism is mounted to the track for moving horizontally along the track. A media object manipulation mechanism such as a gripper mechanism is coupled to the robotic mechanism. The media object manipulation mechanism is vertically movable for moving between the first and second rows of media object storage cells when the robotic mechanism is coupled to the track to manipulate the media objects housed within the first and second rows of media object storage cells.

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22 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets



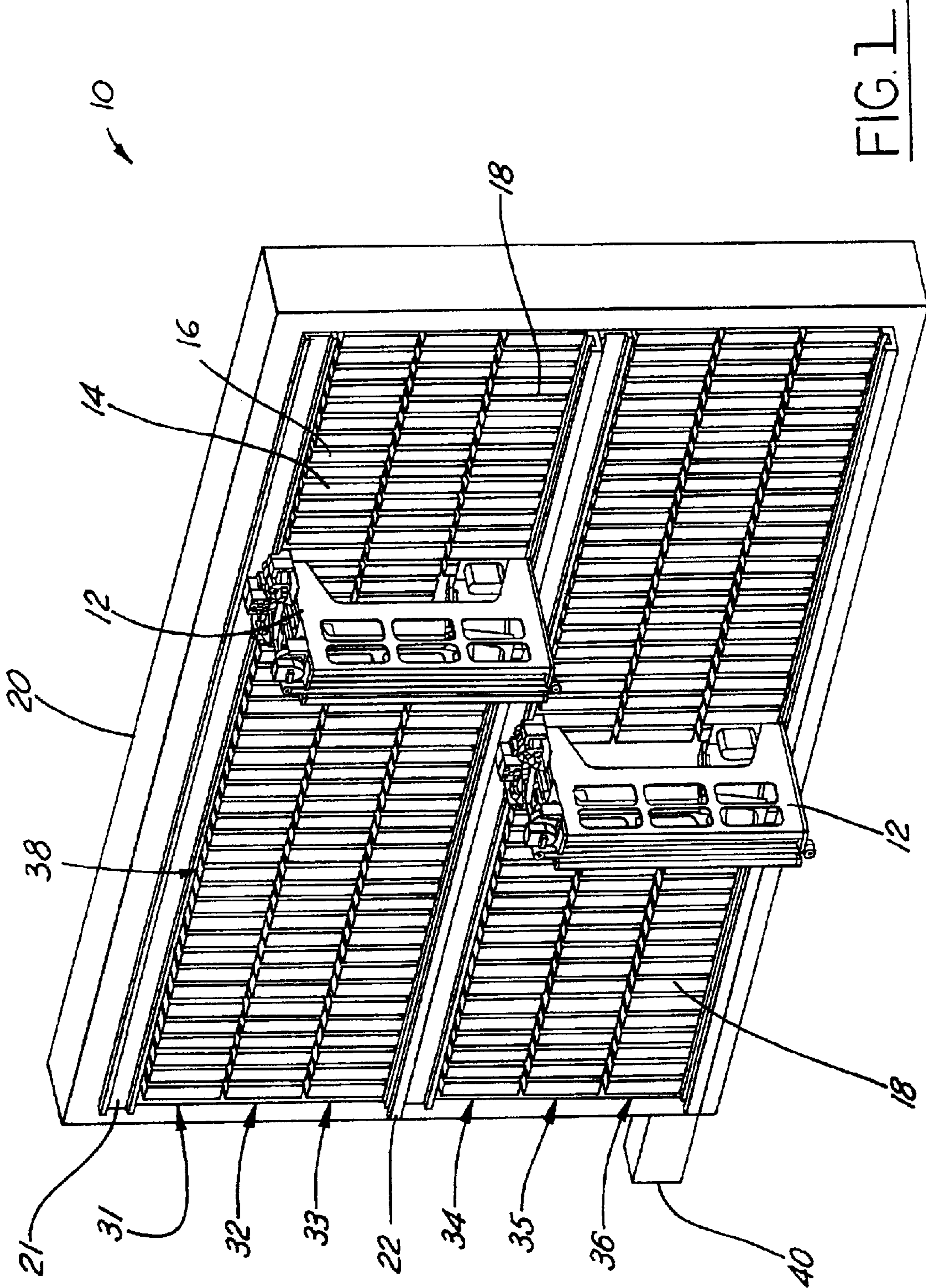


FIG. 1

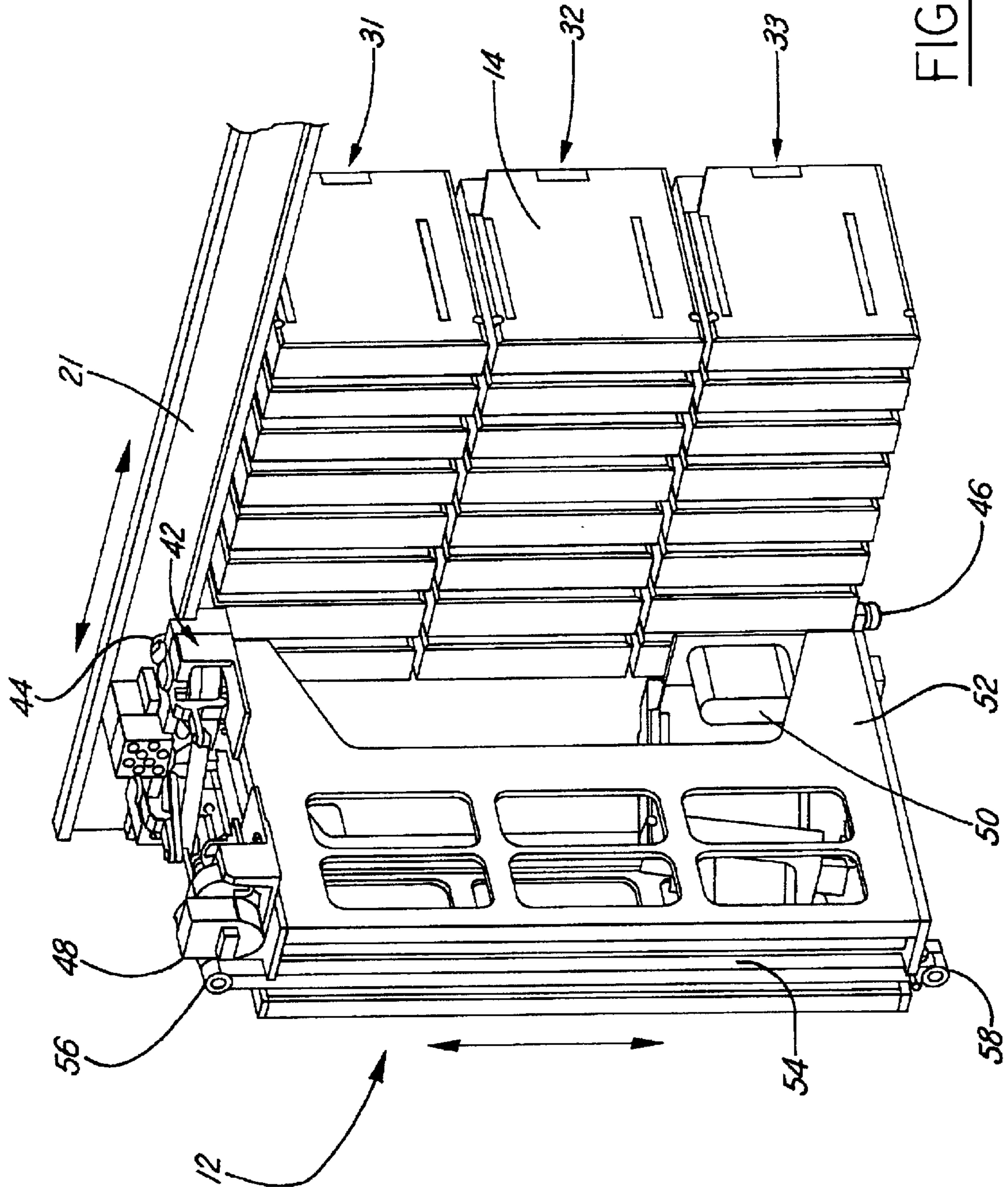
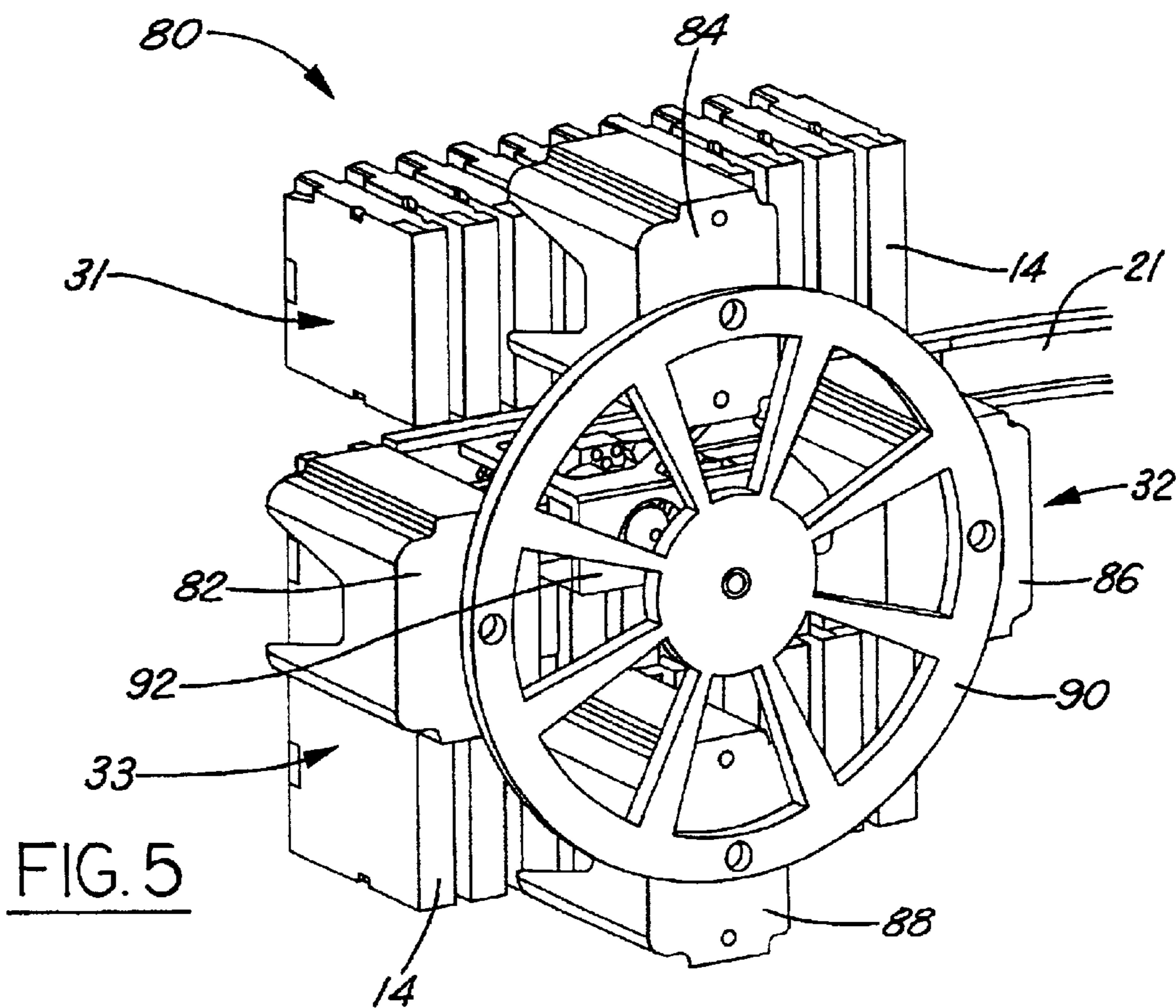
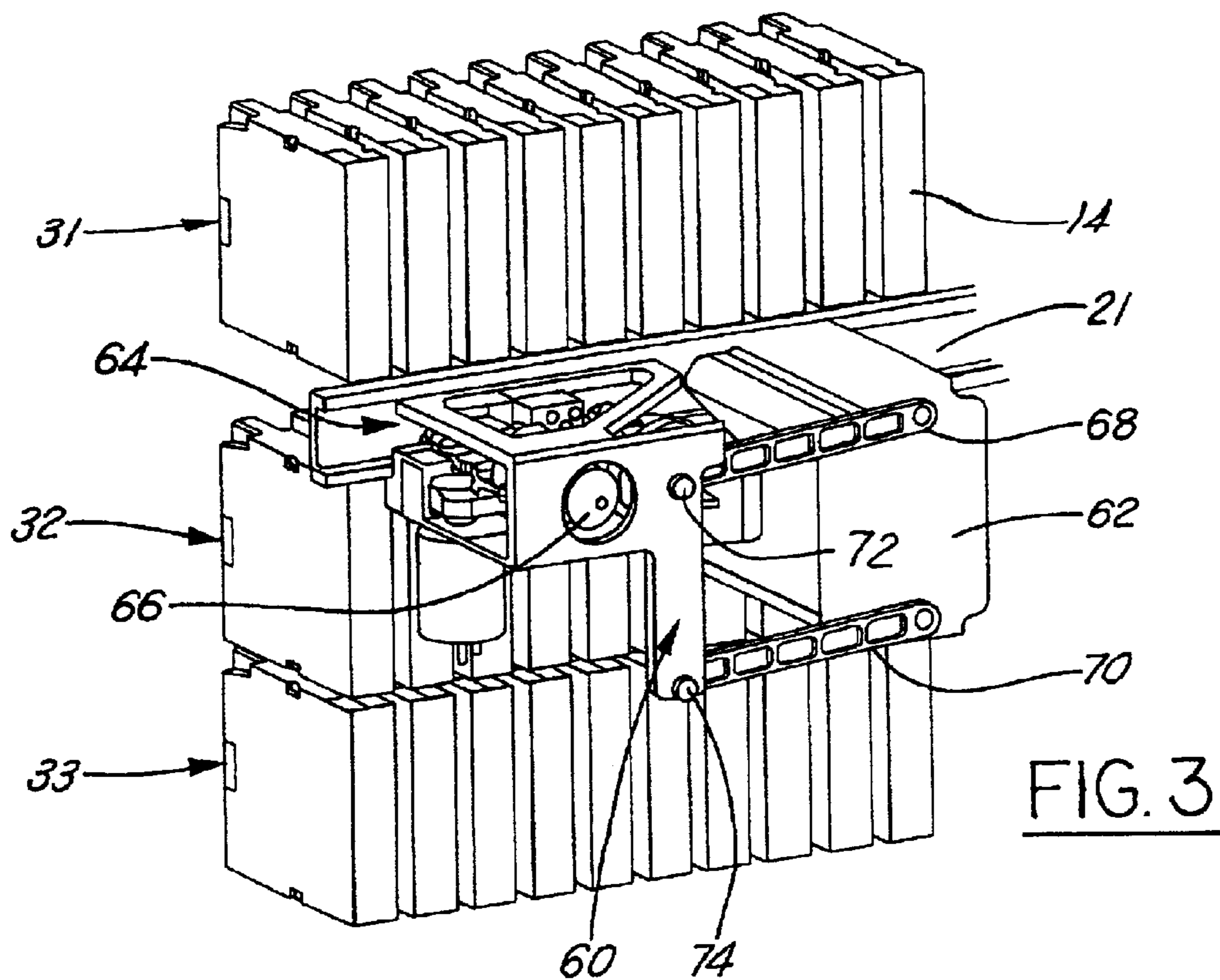
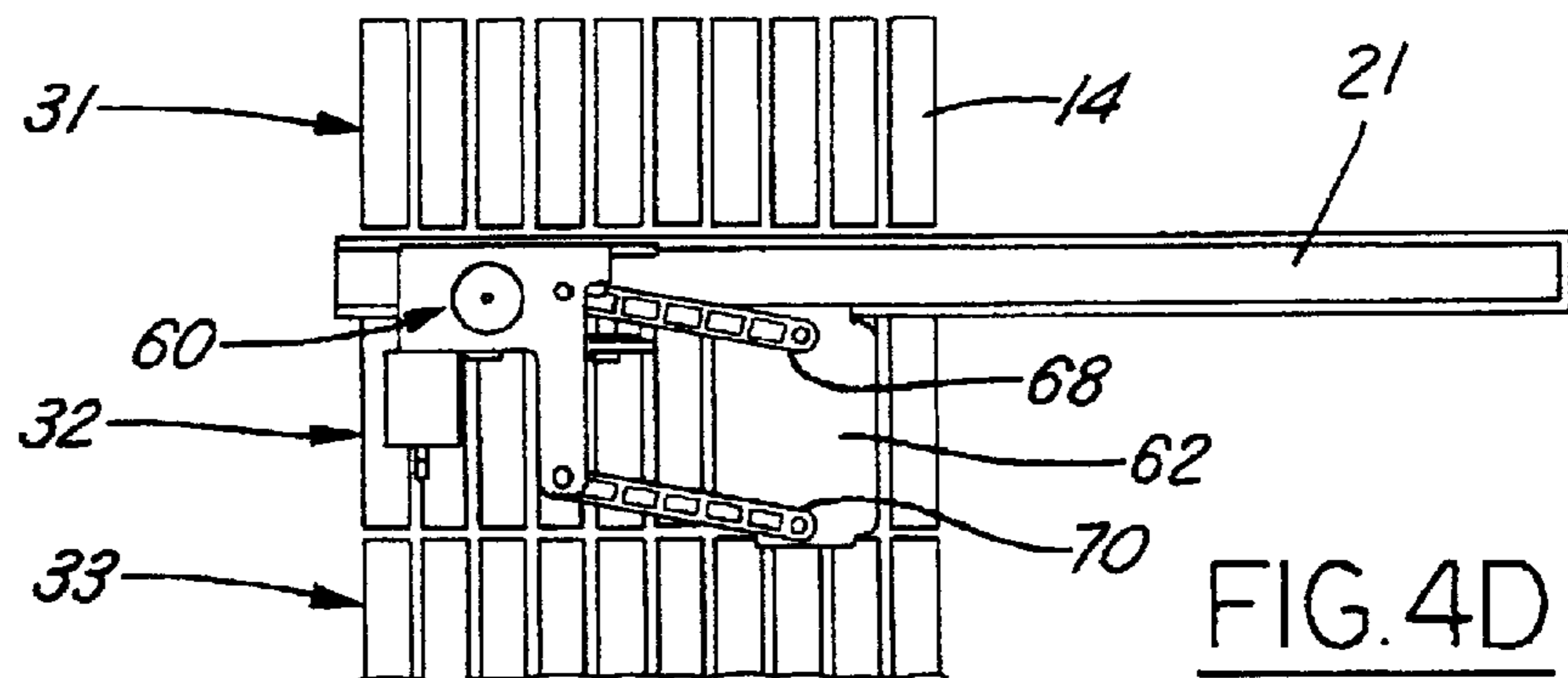
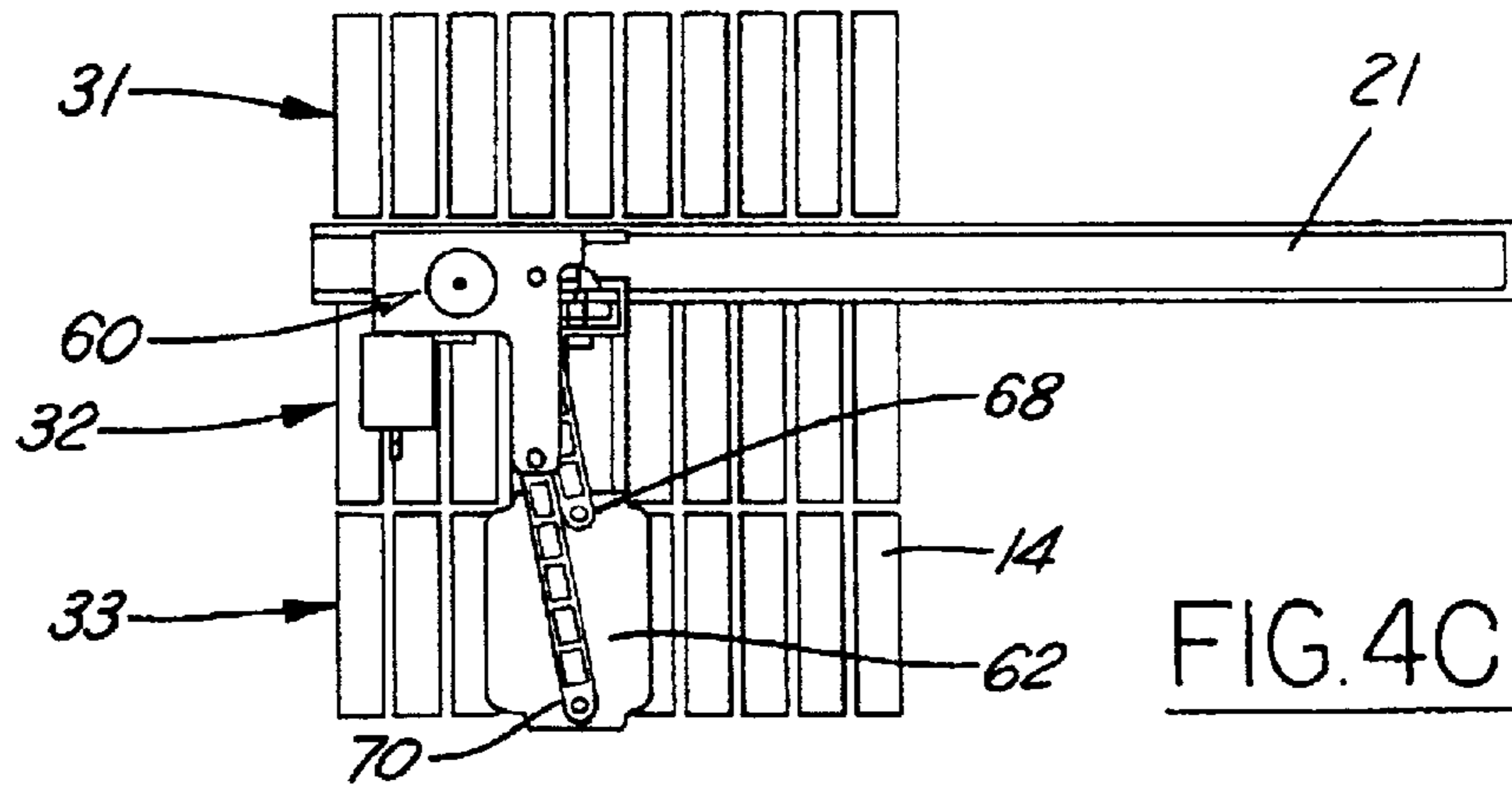
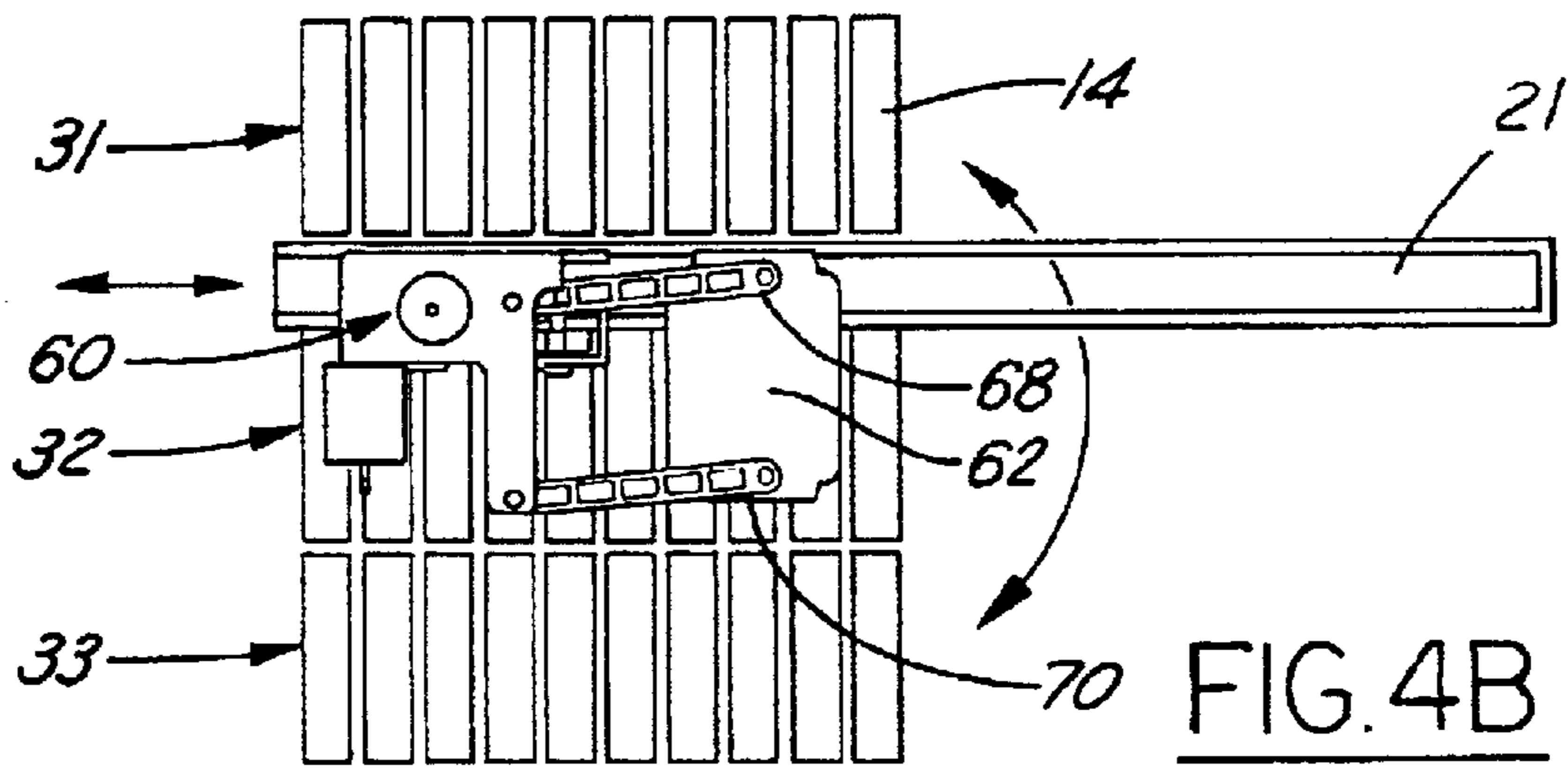
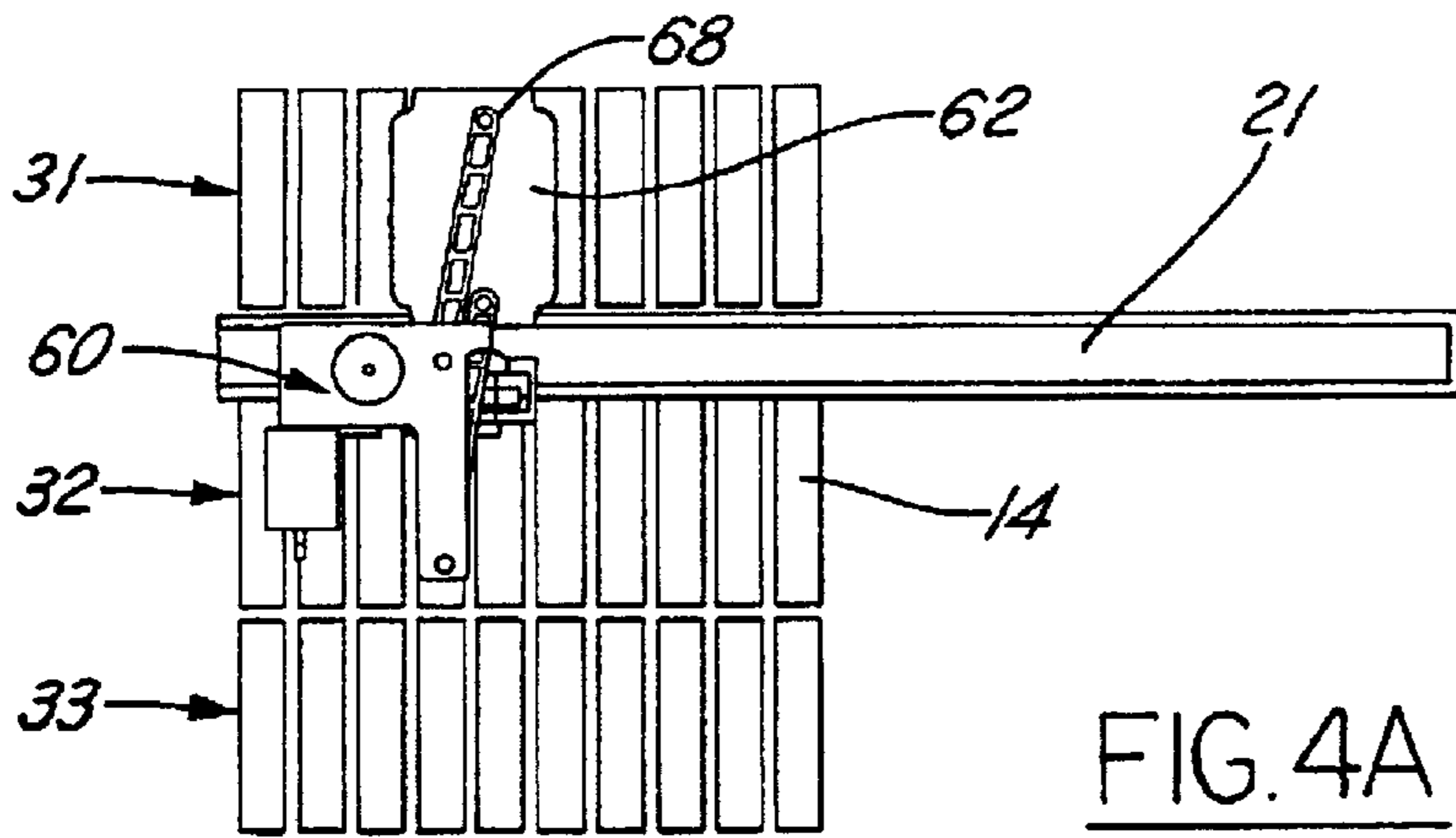


FIG. 2





1

**METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR ACCESSING
MULTIPLE ROWS OF MEDIA OBJECTS IN
AN AUTOMATED STORAGE LIBRARY
USING A SINGLE TRACK ROBOTIC
MECHANISM**

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates generally to automated media storage libraries having robotic mechanisms that move about tracks for manipulating media objects stored along media object rows within the storage libraries and, more particularly, to a method and system for accessing multiple object rows in an automated storage library using a single robotic mechanism mounted to a track arranged in the same plane as the media object rows.

BACKGROUND ART

Existing automated media storage libraries are capable of storing and retrieving large quantities of information stored on media objects such as cartridges. This is accomplished by the use of a large number of cartridge storage cells, each of which houses a media cartridge, that are housed within an enclosure. Such storage libraries use a robotic mechanism (e.g., robot, picker, handbot, accessor, and the like) to quickly move the media cartridges between their media cartridge storage cells and media cartridge players. For example, to retrieve information that is stored on a selected media cartridge, a robotic mechanism moves to a location opposite the media cartridge storage cell housing the selected media cartridge. An end effector of the robotic mechanism then grasps the media cartridge and extracts it from the media cartridge storage cell to a media player where the end effector loads the media cartridge into the media player.

As automated storage libraries have become larger and more complex, their designs have evolved from a single robotic arm performing all media cartridge manipulations to multiple robotic mechanisms operating on several media cartridges and media players simultaneously. The ability to manipulate several media cartridges simultaneously has increased the throughput of the automated storage libraries. While one independent robotic mechanism is busy transferring one media cartridge from a media storage cell to a media player for mounting, a second independent robotic mechanism can be transferring another media cartridge to an access port, while a third robotic mechanism may be conducting an inventory of the storage library.

A typical automated storage library includes horizontally arranged support tracks laid throughout the storage library. The tracks are positioned along horizontally arranged rows of the storage library in the same plane of the rows. Each row includes multiple media cartridge storage cells. The media cartridge storage cells of the horizontally arranged rows form vertically arranged columns. The robotic mechanisms mount to the tracks to move horizontally along the rows throughout the storage library to access the media cartridges and the media players. The robotic mechanisms may include drive or propulsion means coupled to driving wheels for moving along the tracks. The robotic mechanisms may further include media object manipulation mechanisms such as media cartridge pickers or grippers, bar code reading devices, and other task oriented sub-modules for performing various tasks on media cartridges and media players.

It is generally desired that at least one robotic mechanism be mounted on a track associated with a media cartridge

2

storage cell row of a storage library. For instance, if there are twelve media cartridge storage cell rows in the storage library then it is desired that there be twelve robotic mechanisms (one for each row or more for redundancy) in the storage library. Each robotic mechanism is a relatively expensive high performance device. Accordingly, a problem with having at least one robotic mechanism for each media cartridge storage cell row is the cost associated with such a relatively large number of robotic mechanisms.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a method and system for accessing multiple media object vertically arranged columns and horizontally arranged rows in an automated storage library using a single robotic mechanism mounted to a horizontally arranged track arranged in the same plane of the media object rows.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a method and system in which a plurality of robotic mechanisms mounted to horizontally arranged tracks arranged in the same plane as horizontally arranged media object rows in an automated storage library each have storage library media object column and row accessibility.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a method and system in which a plurality of robotic mechanisms mounted to horizontally arranged tracks arranged in the same plane as horizontally arranged media object rows in an automated storage library each have horizontal and vertical movement capability to access media object columns and rows in the storage library.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide a method and system in which a plurality of robotic mechanisms mounted to horizontally arranged tracks arranged in the same plane as horizontally arranged media object rows in an automated storage library each have rotational movement capability to access media object columns and rows in the storage library.

In carrying out the above objects and other objects, the present invention provides a storage library for the storage and retrieval of media objects. The storage library includes first and second horizontally arranged rows of media object storage cells arranged in a common plane. Each of the media object storage cells is for housing a media object. A horizontally arranged track is arranged in the common plane and disposed adjacent to the first row of media object storage cells. A robotic mechanism is coupled to the track for moving horizontally along the track. A media object manipulation mechanism such as a gripper mechanism is coupled to the robotic mechanism. The gripper mechanism is vertically movable for moving between the first and second rows of media object storage cells when the robotic mechanism is coupled to the track to manipulate the media objects housed within the first and second rows of media object storage cells.

The gripper mechanism is vertically movable to move from the first row of media object storage cells to the second row of media object storage cells. The gripper mechanism is vertically movable to move from the second row of media object storage cells back to the first row of media object storage cells.

The storage library may include a third horizontally arranged row of media object storage cells arranged in the common plane. The gripper mechanism is vertically movable for moving between the first, second, and third rows of media object storage cells to manipulate the media objects housed within the first, second, and third rows of media object storage cells.

3

The track may be disposed between the first and second rows of media object storage cells. The second row may be below the first row with the track disposed above the first row. The media objects may include media cartridges and media players. The gripper mechanism may move vertically directly or rotationally between the first and second rows.

The storage library may include third and fourth horizontally arranged rows of media object storage cells arranged in the common plane and a second horizontally arranged track arranged in the common plane and disposed adjacent to the third row of media object storage cells. A second robotic mechanism is coupled to the second track for moving horizontally along the second track. A second gripper mechanism is coupled to the second robotic mechanism. The second gripper mechanism is vertically movable for moving between the third and fourth rows of media object storage cells when the second robotic mechanism is coupled to the second track to manipulate the media objects housed within the third and fourth rows of media object storage cells.

In carrying out the above objects and other objects, the present invention further provides a robotic mechanism for an automated storage library having first and second rows of media object storage cells arranged in a common plane. The robotic mechanism includes a media object manipulation mechanism and a carriage. The carriage couples to a track arranged in the common plane and disposed between the first and second rows of media object storage cells to move the media object manipulation mechanism along the track. The media object manipulation mechanism is vertically movable to manipulate media objects housed above and below the track in the first and second rows of media object storage cells of the automated storage library.

In carrying out the above objects and further objects, the present invention also provides a method of operating a storage library having first and second horizontally arranged rows of media object storage cells arranged in a common plane. Each of the media object storage cells is for housing a media object. A horizontally arranged track is arranged in the common plane and disposed adjacent to the first row of media object storage cells. The method includes coupling a robotic mechanism to the track for horizontal movement along the track. The method further includes vertically moving a media object manipulation mechanism coupled to the robotic mechanism between the first and second rows of media object storage cells when the robotic mechanism is coupled to the track for manipulating the media objects housed within the first and second rows of media object storage cells.

The advantages associated with the present invention are numerous. The present invention greatly reduces the cost associated with typical automated storage libraries having multiple robotic mechanisms while retaining access to all media objects contained in the storage library. The higher media object density allows the storage library to have more storage value per square foot. The present invention also creates a closer match between the host data needs (typical file size and time in drive numbers) and the performance of the storage library (mounts per unit time).

The above objects and other objects, features, and advantages of the present invention are readily apparent from the following detailed description of the best mode for carrying out the present invention when taken in connection with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates a perspective view of an automated storage library for use with the method and system of the present invention;

4

FIG. 2 illustrates a perspective view of a robotic mechanism in accordance with the method and system of the present invention;

FIG. 3 illustrates a perspective view of an alternative embodiment of a robotic mechanism in accordance with the method and system of the present invention;

FIGS. 4A, 4B, 4C, and 4D illustrate a rotational movement of the robotic mechanism shown in FIG. 3; and

FIG. 5 illustrates a perspective view of another alternative embodiment of a robotic mechanism in accordance with the method and system of the present invention.

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

In general, the present invention is a method and system for accessing multiple media object vertically arranged columns and horizontally arranged rows using a single robotic mechanism mounted to a horizontally arranged track arranged in the same plane as the media object rows in an automated storage library. The track mounted robotic mechanism is operable to move horizontally (X) across a row to access media objects in the row. The robotic mechanism includes a "Y" mechanism to vertically access media objects in other rows above and below the row in which the robotic mechanism moves across. Because the robotic mechanism has multiple row accessibility the cost of the storage library is reduced with respect to typical storage libraries. For example, in a storage library having twelve media object rows only four robotic mechanisms each having three row accessibility would be needed as opposed to twelve robotic mechanisms in typical storage libraries. The multiple row capability of each robotic mechanism reduces the need for the mechanical support and power rail system due to the reduced number of needed tracks. The new free space may be used for additional media object storage area thus increasing the storage density of the storage library.

Referring now to FIG. 1, an automated storage library 10 in accordance with the method and system of the present invention is shown. Storage library 10 includes multiple independent robotic mechanisms (robotic pods or accessors) 12 to enable the storage library to concurrently manipulate multiple media objects such as media cartridges 14. Storage library 10 includes a two-dimensional vertical standing array of media cartridge storage cells and media cartridge players 18 that are mounted in a frame 20. A system of horizontally arranged parallel tracks 21 and 22 guide robotic mechanisms 12 horizontally through all of the locations of the array. A system of powered rails are associated with tracks 21 and 22 for providing energy to robotic mechanisms 12 for the robotic mechanisms to use in carrying out various functions. Robotic mechanisms 12 contain a movable carriage that is capable of transporting robotic components, such as media cartridge pickers, bar code reading devices, and other task oriented sub-modules on tracks 21 and 22 of storage library 10.

Frame 20 is designed to receive a plurality of horizontal rows 31-36 of media cartridge storage cells 16 each of which is designed to house a single media cartridge 14. Rows 31-36 are arranged in a common plane and serve to frame media cartridge storage cells 16 and media cartridge players 18 on the top and bottom sides thereof. Subsets of media cartridge storage cells 16 in rows 31-36 form vertical columns. The vertical columns are generally designated as 38. For example, a media cartridge storage cell 16 in row 31 is directly above a media cartridge storage cell in row 32 and

a media cartridge storage cell in row **33** is directly below the media cartridge storage cell in row **32**, etc.

Media cartridge players **18** are shown in an arbitrary location in horizontally arranged rows **33** and **36** in frame **20**. Storage library **10** can incorporate media cartridge players **18** at any location in frame **20** to optimize performance. Storage library **10** includes an array of media cartridge storage cells **16** fully populated with media cartridges **14** of any type.

Robotic mechanisms **12** are attached to frame **20** via horizontally arranged guide tracks **21** and **22**. Tracks **21** and **22** are arranged in the common plane and disposed adjacent to at least one row of media cartridge storage cells **16**. For example, track **21** is disposed adjacent to row **31** and track **22** is disposed adjacent to rows **33** and **34**. Tracks **21** and **22** provide support of robotic mechanisms **12** in the vertical direction to oppose the force of gravity, and they also provide a meshing surface to impart traction in the horizontal direction for motive transport of the robotic mechanisms.

A storage library controller **40** provides commands to robotic mechanisms **12** to manipulate media cartridges **14**. Controller **40** communicates with each robotic mechanism **12** individually by radio frequency communication links, infrared communication links, and other wireless communications links. Wired communications may also be used. Commands to robotic mechanisms **12** include movement along tracks **21** and **22**, movement of media cartridges **14** into and out of the robotic mechanisms, reading bar codes on the media cartridges, and the like.

Controller **40** and robotic mechanisms **12** are operable with one another such that the controller knows the position of the robotic mechanisms within storage library **10** as they move about tracks **21** and **22**. This is accomplished by mounting position sensors on robotic mechanisms **12** which provide information regarding the position of the robotic mechanisms to controller **40**. This may also be accomplished by providing sensors on tracks **21** and **22** which are actuated to transmit a signal to controller **40** when a robotic mechanism **12** traverses a sensor on tracks **21** and **22**. This may further be accomplished by having robotic mechanisms **12** provide information to controller **40** regarding the speed and direction of their travels through storage library **10**.

Controller **40** may also be in communication with media cartridge players **18**. Controller **40** may provide commands to mount and dismount media cartridges **14** into and out of media cartridge players **18**. Controller **40** coordinates these commands with positioning commands to a robotic mechanism **12** that supplies or receives a media cartridge **14** to and from a media cartridge player **18**.

Referring now to FIG. **2**, with continual reference to FIG. **1**, a perspective view of a robotic mechanism **12** in accordance with the method and system of the present invention is shown. Robotic mechanism **12** includes a base assembly having a frame **42** for structural support. Frame **42** suspends in track **21** by drive wheels **44** that ride in a main groove provided in the track. Rotation of drive wheels **44** causes robotic mechanism **12** to move horizontally along track **21**. Drive wheels **44** rotate clockwise and counterclockwise to allow robotic mechanism **12** to move in both directions along track **21**. Idler wheels **46** are positioned at the bottom of robotic mechanism **12** for riding in additional grooves or tracks (not shown) of storage library **10**. Idler wheels **46** help orient and guide robotic mechanism **12** with respect to media cartridge storage cells **16** and media cartridge players **18**. Robotic mechanism **12** includes a drive motor **48** operable for driving drive wheels **44** to move the robotic mechanism along track **21**.

Robotic mechanism **12** further includes a media object manipulation mechanism such as a gripper mechanism **50**. Gripper mechanism **50** is operable to move to an extended position to grasp a media cartridge **14** from a media cartridge storage cell **16** or media cartridge player **18** and to move back to a retracted position to pull the media cartridge into robotic mechanism **12**. Robotic mechanism **12** may then move horizontally along track **21** to transport the selected media cartridge **14** to a designated location such as a media cartridge player **18**. Likewise, gripper mechanism **50** is operable to move from a retracted position to an extended position to place a media cartridge **14** into a media cartridge storage cell **16** or media cartridge player **18**. Robotic mechanism **12** also includes a vertically extending housing **52**. Housing **52** houses gripper mechanism **50** and extends vertically across three rows **31**, **32**, and **33** of media cartridges **14**. It is to be appreciated that housing **52** may be appropriately sized to extend vertically across more than three rows for enabling gripper mechanism **50** to access more than three rows.

In accordance with the method and system of the present invention, gripper mechanism **50** is vertically movable to access media cartridges **14** along vertical columns in each of the three horizontal rows **31**, **32**, and **33**. In order to vertically move, gripper mechanism **50** is attached by a drive belt **54** to motor **48**. Drive belt **54** wraps around a pair of drive pulleys **56** and **58** mounted at each end of housing **52**. Motor **48** is connected to drive pulley **56** for driving the drive pulley to vertically move gripper mechanism **50** via drive belt **54**. As a result of the horizontal movement of robotic mechanism **12** along track **21** and the vertical movement of gripper mechanism **50** the track mounted robotic mechanism may manipulate media cartridges **14** anywhere horizontally and vertically along the three rows **31**, **32**, and **33**. In contrast, typical track mounted robotic mechanisms may only manipulate media cartridges horizontally in one row.

It is to be noted that typically media cartridge players are located at the end of a row of media cartridge storage cells. The vertical size of the media cartridge players are generally larger than the vertical size of the media cartridge storage cells. For example, the vertical size of two media cartridge players is roughly equal to the vertical size of three rows of media cartridge storage cells. Because of the differences in vertical size, typical storage libraries space two rows of media cartridge storage cells apart from one another to line up with two respective media cartridge players thereby resulting in a loss of space efficiency. The method and system of the present invention overcome this problem by enabling the robotic mechanism to access more than one row of media cartridge storage cells and media cartridge players. Thus, the rows of media cartridge storage cells of a storage library in accordance with the method and system of the present invention may be spaced adjacent to one another. For example, as shown in FIG. **2**, three rows of media cartridge storage cells may be spaced adjacent to one another and are serviced by two rows of media cartridge players (not specifically shown in FIG. **2**).

Referring now to FIG. **3** and FIGS. **4A**, **4B**, **4C**, and **4D**, with continual reference to FIG. **1**, an alternative embodiment of a robotic mechanism **60** for use with the method and system of the present invention is shown. In general, like robotic mechanism **12**, robotic mechanism **60** may also manipulate media cartridges **14** anywhere horizontally and vertically along the three rows **31**, **32**, and **33**. To this end, robotic mechanism **60** includes a gripper mechanism **62** for gripping media cartridges **14** and a trolley or carriage **64**.

Trolley **64** mounts in track **21**. A servo motor **66** is operable to drive trolley **64** to move robotic mechanism **60** horizontally along track **21**.

A pair of parallel linkage arms **68** and **70** are connected to gripper mechanism **62**. Servo motor **66** is also operable to drive linkage arms **68** and **70** such that the linkage arms rotate along an arc about respective pivot axes **72** and **74**. In response to rotational movement of linkage arms **68** and **70**, gripper mechanism **62** rotationally moves in correspondence. Gripper mechanism **62** may rotationally move from row **32** up to row **31** to access a media cartridge **14** in row **31**. Similarly, gripper mechanism **62** may rotationally move from row **31** down through row **32** and then down to row **33** to access a media cartridge **14** in row **33**.

In FIG. **4A**, gripper mechanism **62** has been rotationally moved upward with respect to the body of robotic mechanism **12** to access media cartridges in row **31**. In FIG. **4B**, gripper mechanism **62** has rotationally moved down from row **31** to a position generally parallel with respect to the body of robotic mechanism **12**. In this position, robotic mechanism **12** may easily move horizontally along track **21** and overcome inertia problems as opposed to when gripper mechanism **62** is above or below the body of the robotic mechanism. In FIG. **4C**, gripper mechanism **62** has rotationally moved downward with respect to the body of robotic mechanism **12** to access media cartridges in row **33**. In FIG. **4D**, gripper mechanism **62** has rotationally moved upward from row **33** to row **32** in order to access media cartridges in row **32**.

It is to be appreciated that robotic mechanism **60** may be configured with the appropriately sized linkage arms to extend across more than three rows. Robotic mechanism **60** may include additional gripper mechanisms supported by an additional pair of linkage arms. Further, instead of linkage arms, robotic mechanism **60** may include telescoping arms that can extend from one row to another row. For instance, from a first row to a fourth row.

Referring now to FIG. **5**, a perspective view of another alternative embodiment of a robotic mechanism **80** in accordance with the method and system of the present invention is shown. In general, like robotic mechanisms **12** and **60**, robotic mechanism **80** may also manipulate media cartridges **14** anywhere horizontally and vertically along three or more rows including rows **31**, **32**, and **33**. Robotic mechanism **80** includes a Ferris wheel type arrangement of four gripper mechanisms **82**, **84**, **86**, and **88**. Each gripper mechanism **82**, **84**, **86**, and **88** is supported on a wheel **90**. A carriage or trolley **92** is connected to wheel **90**. Trolley **92** mounts in track **21** to move robotic mechanism **90** horizontally along the track.

A servo motor is operable to rotate wheel **90** such that gripper mechanisms **82**, **84**, **86**, and **88** move along in a circle from one row to another row. For example, wheel **90** may rotate to move gripper mechanism **82** from row **32** up to row **31**; gripper mechanism **84** from row **31** down to row **32**; gripper mechanism **86** from row **32** down to row **33**; and gripper mechanism **88** from row **33** up to row **32**. Robotic mechanism **80** is suited with functioning with like Ferris wheel type robotic mechanisms to provide a measure of redundancy on a row. That is, the wheels of two robotic mechanisms **80** may move to position gripper mechanisms on the same row. In general, robotic mechanisms capable of providing orbital movement to gripper mechanisms such as robotic mechanism **80** and robotic mechanism **60** shown in FIG. **3** may function together to provide this measure of redundancy on a row.

Thus it is apparent that there has been provided, in accordance with the present invention, a method and system for accessing multiple rows of media objects in an automated storage library using a single track mounted robotic mechanism that fully satisfy the objects, aims, and advantages set forth above. While the present invention has been described in conjunction with specific embodiments thereof, it is evident that many alternatives, modifications, and variations will be apparent to those skilled in the art in light of the foregoing description. Accordingly, it is intended to embrace all such alternatives, modifications, and variations as fall within the spirit and broad scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A storage library for the storage and retrieval of media objects, the storage library comprising:

a frame;

first and second horizontally arranged rows of media object storage cells arranged within the frame in a common plane, each of the media object storage cells for housing a media object;

a horizontally arranged track attached to the frame and arranged in the common plane, the track being disposed adjacent to the first row of media object storage cells;

a robotic mechanism coupled to the track for moving horizontally along the track; and

a media object manipulation mechanism coupled to the robotic mechanism, wherein the media object manipulation mechanism is vertically movable for moving between the first and second rows of media object storage cells when the robotic mechanism is coupled to the track in order to manipulate the media objects housed within the first and second rows of media object storage cells.

2. The storage library of claim 1 wherein:

the media object manipulation mechanism is a gripper mechanism.

3. The storage library of claim 1 wherein:

the media object manipulation mechanism is vertically movable to move from the first row of media object storage cells to the second row of media object storage cells.

4. The storage library of claim 3 wherein:

the media object manipulation mechanism is vertically movable to move from the second row of media object storage cells back to the first row of media object storage cells.

5. The storage library of claim 1 further comprising:

a third horizontally arranged row of media object storage cells arranged within the frame in the common plane, wherein the media object manipulation mechanism is vertically movable for moving between the first, second, and third rows of media object storage cells in order to manipulate the media objects housed within the first, second, and third rows of media object storage cells.

6. The storage library of claim 1 wherein:

the track is disposed between the first and second rows of media object storage cells.

7. The storage library of claim 1 wherein:

the second row of media object storage cells is below the first row of media object storage cells and the track is disposed above the first row of media object storage cells.

9

8. The storage library of claim 1 wherein:
the media objects include media cartridges.
9. The storage library of claim 1 wherein:
the media objects include media players.
10. The storage library of claim 1 further comprising:
third and fourth horizontally arranged rows of media
object storage cells arranged within the frame in the
common plane, each of the media object storage cells
for housing a media object;
a second horizontally arranged track attached to the frame
and arranged in the common plane, the second track
being disposed between the second and third rows of
media object storage cells; and
a second robotic mechanism coupled to the second track
for moving horizontally along the second track; and
a second media object manipulation mechanism coupled
to the second robotic mechanism, wherein the second
media object manipulation mechanism is vertically
movable for moving between the third and fourth rows
of media object storage cells when the second robotic
mechanism is coupled to the second track in order to
manipulate the media objects housed within the third
and fourth rows of media object storage cells.
11. The storage library of claim 10 wherein:
the second media object manipulation mechanism is ver-
tically movable for moving between the second and
third rows of media object storage cells when the
second robotic mechanism is coupled to the second
track to manipulate the media objects housed within the
second and third rows of media object storage cells.
12. The storage library of claim 1 wherein:
the media object manipulation mechanism directly moves
vertically between the first and second rows of media
object storage cells.
13. The storage library of claim 1 wherein:
the media object manipulation mechanism rotates to move
vertically between the first and second rows of media
object storage cells.
14. A storage library for the storage and retrieval of media
objects, the storage library comprising:
a frame;
first, second, and third horizontally arranged parallel rows
of media object storage cells arranged within the frame
in a common plane, the second row of media object
storage cells disposed between the first and third rows
of media object storage cells, each of the media object
storage cells for housing a media object;
a first track attached to the frame and arranged in the
common plane, the first track being disposed adjacent
to the first row of media object storage cells;
a second track attached to the frame and arranged in the
common plane, the second track being disposed
between the first and second rows of media object
storage cells;
a first robotic mechanism coupled to the first track for
moving horizontally along the first track, the first
robotic mechanism having a first media object manipu-
lation mechanism vertically movable for moving
between the first and second rows of media object
storage cells in order to manipulate the media objects
housed within the first and second rows of media object
storage cells; and
a second robotic mechanism coupled to the second track
for moving horizontally along the second track, the

10

- second robotic mechanism having a second media
object manipulation mechanism vertically movable for
moving between the second and third rows of media
object storage cells in order to manipulate the media
objects housed within the second and third rows of
media object storage cells.
15. A robotic mechanism for an automated storage library
having first and second rows of media object storage cells
arranged within a frame in a common plane, the robotic
mechanism comprising:
a media object manipulation mechanism; and
a carriage for coupling to a track attached to the frame,
arranged in the common plane and disposed between
the first and second rows of media object storage cells
to move the media object manipulation mechanism
along the track, wherein the media object manipulation
mechanism is vertically movable in order to manipulate
media objects housed above and below the track in the
first and second rows of media object storage cells of
the automated storage library.
16. The storage library of claim 15 further comprising:
a carousel associated with the media object manipulation
mechanism for rotating the gripper mechanism to be
vertically movable.
17. A method of operating a storage library having first
and second horizontally arranged rows of media object
storage cells arranged within a frame in a common plane,
each of the media object storage cells for housing a media
object, and a horizontally arranged track attached to the
frame, arranged in the common plane, and disposed adjacent
to the first row of media object storage cells, the method
comprising:
coupling a robotic mechanism to the track such that the
robotic mechanism is attached to the frame by the track
for horizontal movement along the track; and
vertically moving a media object manipulation mecha-
nism coupled to the robotic mechanism between the
first and second rows of media object storage cells
when the robotic mechanism is coupled to the track;
and
manipulating the media objects housed within the first and
second rows of media object storage cells with the
media object manipulation mechanism after the media
object manipulation mechanism has been vertically
moved.
18. The method of claim 17 wherein:
vertically moving the media object manipulation mecha-
nism includes vertically moving the media object
manipulation mechanism from the first row of media
object storage cells to the second row of media object
storage cells.
19. The method of claim 18 wherein:
vertically moving the media object manipulation mecha-
nism includes vertically moving the media object
manipulation mechanism from the second row of media
object storage cells back to the first row of media object
storage cells.
20. The method of claim 17 wherein the storage library
includes a third horizontally arranged row of media object
storage cells arranged within the frame in the common
plane, wherein:
vertically moving the media object manipulation mecha-
nism includes vertically moving the media object
manipulation mechanism between the first, second, and
third rows of media object storage cells in order to

11

manipulate the media objects housed within the first, second, and third rows of media object storage cells.

21. The method of claim **17** wherein:

vertically moving the media object manipulation mechanism includes directly moving the media object manipulation mechanism vertically between the first and second rows of media object storage cells. ⁵

12

22. The method of claim **17** wherein:

vertically moving the media object manipulation mechanism includes rotating the media object manipulation mechanism to move vertically between the first and second rows of media object storage cells.

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